

The Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith



JOEL BRAY MARANGELLA

Third Guardian of the Bahá'í World Faith

On 21 September 1964, Charles Mason Remey, the Second Guardian of the Bahá'í World Faith, announced the creation of the second International Bahá'í Council and appointed Joel Bray Marangella its President. The significance of this appointment was certainly realized by the Bahá'ís under the guardianship as Shoghi Effendi had used this same instrumentality in making his appointment of his successor by naming Mason Remey President of the first International Bahá'í Council (the embryonic Universal House of Justice).

Early History -

Joel Bray Marangella was born on 22 September 1918 in Lynn, Massachusetts, in the United States of America. His father, Phillip Amalfi Marangella, came from a large Italian family who had immigrated to the United States when he was a boy of about four years of age. As a young man he became dissatisfied with the religious faith of his parents and undertook an extensive search for the Truth. One day he happened upon a book in the New York City public library written against the Bahá'í Faith. This caused him to become interested in finding out the truth about the Faith. His subsequent investigations led to his acceptance of the Faith while Joel was still a baby. Joel's mother, born Edith Brooks Guthrie, came from a completely different background, being a Virginian by birth and raised in the Protestant faith. Even before she met Phillip Marangella she, too, had begun to search elsewhere for a faith that would satisfy her needs and her investigation of the Baha'í Faith led to her becoming a Bahá'í with him. This being the case, Joel Bray Marangella was exposed to the Teachings of the Faith at an early age, but in accordance with the Bahá'í Principle of independent investigation of the Truth, his parents always encouraged him to investigate other religious movements and faiths which he did.

During these early years Joel Bray Marangella was most fortunate to spend several months every summer at Green Acre, Eliot, Maine, where the first Bahá'í summer school had been established around the turn of the century

and whose precincts had been forever hallowed by the footsteps of the Master when he visited America in 1912. Anyone who visits this beautiful spot located some five miles from the ocean on the Piscataqua River and senses the spiritual atmosphere, which pervades it can well understand why Shoghi Effendi, the first Guardian of the Baha’l Faith, should have referred to it as the "*Acca of the West.*" Joel’s first visit to Green Acre was when he was but two years of age or so, and then later when his father moved to Portsmouth, N.H., and built a summer cottage in Green Acre, this permitted him to enjoy a somewhat longer stay during the summer than those who were guests of the Green Acre Inn. It was in such a setting that he was privileged to attend the classes and lectures held at the school and come to know most of the early believers in America who had met the Master and many of whom had been amongst that early group of pilgrims who had visited the Master in the Holy Land. They were, indeed, aflame with the love of the Faith, with Bahá’u’lláh, and with the Master, Abdu’l-Baha. And as they came to understand the significance of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, and the provisions of the Will and Testament of Abdu’l-Baha, that established the Institutions of the Baha’l Administrative Order they became loyal supporters of Shoghi Effendi, the first Guardian of the Faith. He also came to know some of the old believers who had taken up permanent residence in Green Acre, such as the immortal Marion Jack, who later in her response to the appeal of Shoghi Effendi for pioneers, distinguished herself so gloriously in her services for the Faith in Bulgaria, where she remained until her death – a Bahá’í heroine who Shoghi Effendi eulogized as a shining example to future pioneers of the Faith. His

association with these dedicated and devoted believers exerted a profound influence on him as a young boy and one, which persisted throughout his life.

Later Years –

In later years Joel Bray Marangella lived in some of the major cities of the United States, including Boston, Miami, Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, and in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. (Rosslyn and Arlington, Virginia.) As soon as he was able to do so at the age of 15, he declared his intention of becoming a Bahá'í, becoming an enrolled believer at the then legal age of 21, when he was able to participate in both the spiritual and administrative activities of the thriving Bahá'í communities found in the cities cited above. Joel Bray Marangella's marriage to Irene Marie Aducat (a Bahá'í) took place in September 1945 in a Bahá'í ceremony held in the lovely Evergreen Cabin at West Englewood, New Jersey, the site of the annual Souvenir picnic which commemorates the gathering held on its grounds for 'Abdu'l-Bahá during his visit to America in 1912.

Pioneering in Europe -

In the spring of 1950, prompted by an appeal of Shoghi Effendi for Bahá'í pioneers in Europe and with Shoghi Effendi's approval, Joel Bray Marangella and his wife, Irene, accompanied by their two children (Joel Jani and Mark Vali; their third child Paul Maxwell, being born in France in 1953) journeyed to France where they remained for some 18 years, initially

residing in Paris for four years and subsequently in Orleans, before moving to Switzerland and later to Perth, Australia, where they would reside for over thirty years. At Ridván 1954, the Hands of the Cause in Europe appointed Joel Bray Marangella as one of their nine deputies for the propagation of the Faith in that continent as a member of their Auxiliary Board. The Faith expanded in France, and Joel Bray Marangella, after having served as chairman of Local Spiritual Assemblies in Paris and Orleans, participated in the first National Baha’l Convention held in France during Ridvan 1958, in which the first National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of France was elected and became its chairman both at this time and in its successive elections. The momentous and historic [Proclamation of Mason Remey](#) as the second Guardian of the Faith was received by this Assembly at Ridvan 1960. The National Spiritual Assembly of France responded to this [Proclamation](#) by accepting the second Guardian and, as it turned out, became the only Bahá’í National body in the world to recognize and accept the second Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith, Charles Mason Remey, and thus remain loyal to the Covenant and the provisions of the "*Child of the Covenant*" – the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Under the Second Guardian -

On September 1961 the beloved second Guardian of the Faith, Charles Mason Remey, appointed Joel Bray Marangella to be his official representative to meet with the governmental authorities of the State of Israel, for the purpose of explaining to them that he was the second Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith and requesting them to recognize him as such

so that he might be empowered to take up his *"spiritual religious responsibilities and duties in Haifa at the Administrative Center of the Bahá'í Faith as the second Guardian of the Faith appointed to this position by Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, the first Guardian of the Faith."* A month later Joel Bray Marangella journeyed to Israel to carry out this responsibility, meeting twice with the acting Minister of Religious Affairs and the Director of the Bahá'í Department of that ministry and submitting a formal request and pertinent documentation on the part of the second Guardian.

Appointment as Third Guardian -

In December 1961, Joel Bray Marangella received a letter from Mason Remey, which included an inner sealed envelope containing the following hand-written instructions on its cover:

Joel: Please take care of this sealed envelope among your papers in the Bernese Oberland. As I see things now it may have to do with the coming World Catastrophe in or after 1963. You will know when to break the seal.

Mason

Washington D.C., U.S.A.

5 December 1961

According to Mason Remey's instructions Joel Bray Marangella placed this letter in a safety deposit vault in a locality in Switzerland near where he had purchased a home only a short time earlier. On 21 September 1964, Mason Remey announced the creation of the second International Bahá'í Council

and appointed Joel Bray Marangella as its President. The significance of this appointment was certainly realized by the Bahá'ís under the Guardianship as Shoghi Effendi had in the same manner used this instrumentality in effecting the appointment of his successor by naming Mason Remey President of the first International Bahá'í Council (the embryonic Universal House of Justice). In consideration of this fact, Joel Bray Marangella felt that the hour was propitious for him to open the sealed envelope above described and journeyed to Switzerland to do this. The sealed letter contained the following instructions in the hand of Mason Remey:

**Letter Of Appointment of Joel Bray Marangella by the Second Guardian of
the Bahá'ís Faith, Charles Mason Remey**

Washington D.C., U.S.A.

5 December 1961

Dear Joel:

This is to tell you to tell the Bahá'í World that I appoint you to be the Third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith according to the Will and Testament of the Master 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

***Mason, Guardian
of the Bahá'í Faith***

"I took no action on the above directive, nor did I inform any of the believers of this appointment at the time for reasons explained in my [proclamatory](#)

[letter](#) of 12 November 1969.” – Joel Bray Marangella

Joel Bray Marangella Meeting in Florence –

In the summer of 1965, while visiting Mason Remey in Florence, Italy, he directed that Joel Bray Marangella prepare a statement activating the second International Bahá'í Council. (The Bahá'ís would have recalled that the first International Bahá'í Council was never activated.) This statement (approved by Mason Remey) subsequently was published in the October 1965 issue of "*The Glad Tidings*" – the then official news organ of the Orthodox Bahá'í Faith. The consequent responsibilities that Joel Bray Marangella inherited by virtue of the activation of the Council were further affirmed by Mason Remey in a letter addressed to Joel Bray Marangella and published in "*The Glad Tidings*" of May 1966, which stated the following:

"I am turning the affairs of the Faith over to you as the President of the second Bahá'í International Council..."

On 12 November 1969, Joel Bray Marangella issued a [proclamatory letter](#) to the faithful Bahá'í friends throughout the world, announcing his accession to the Guardianship of the Faith as the duly authorized and rightful successor of Mason Remey in accordance with his explicit appointment made under the sacred and inviolable terms of the Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá.

Joel Bray Marangella Writings and Articles –

The World Order Of Baha'u'llah Continues To Unfold - Published by the Bahá'í Scholar's Publishing Trust, Library Of Congress # 2005902276, 2005

"What Will Be Your Excuse When You Meet Shoghi Effendi In The Next World? (A Possible Credible Scenario)" - July 2008

"The Diabolical Subversion Of The Bahá'í Administrative Order"

" Bahá'u'lláh Promises An Uninterrupted Interpretative Authority In The Kitáb-I-Iqàn"

"A Severe Trial Pursueth You"

" Shoghi Effendi Informs The United Nations Of His Role As The "Appointed Head" Of The Future Bahá'í "World Council" Prior To Its Formation In 1951"

"Shoghi Effendi Foretells The Imminence Of His Passing Coincident With The Activation Of The International Bahá'í Council Before Ridván 1963."

"Shoghi Effendi's Only Proclamation Ignored"

"A Letter And Five Messages Acclaiming Shoghi Effendi's "Epoch-Making" Decisions, Both Ignored And Forgotten And Their Import Unperceived."

"The Essentiality Of The Guardianship To The World Order Of Bahá'u'lláh."

"Irrefutable Evidence That Shoghi Effendi, The First Guardian Of The Bahá'í Faith, Appointed A Successor."

"Even Now They Refuse To Face The Undeniable Facts"

"Unanswered Letters To Ruhíyyih Khánum. Ridván 1988" — Naw-Rúz, 1999

"The Fourth And Final Letter Sent To Rúhíyyih Khánum" - Naw-Rúz, 1999

“Excerpts From May Maxwell’s Haifa Notes” - January–March 1937

“Open Letters Of 9 July 1960 And 21 October 1960” - Written By Joel Bray Marangella, Former Chairman Of The National Spiritual Assembly Of France And Auxiliary Member To The Hands Of The Cause In Europe, Stating The Reasons For His Acceptance Of Mason Remey As The Second Guardian Of The Faith. These "Open Letters" Were Posted To A Large Number Of Friends, Following Receipt Of Mason Remey's Proclamation.

“A Brief History Of The Violation Of The Covenant Of Bahá’u’lláh At The World Center Of The Bahá’í Faith Following The Passing Of The First Guardian Of The Bahá’í Faith”. - "Herald Of The Covenant" Winter 1974/75

"The Tree Of The Covenant" - A Statement Of Beliefs Of The Orthodox Bahá’ís Under The Living Guardianship. - "Herald Of The Covenant"—Winter 1973/74 (Published By The European Bureau Of The Orthodox Bahá’í Faith)

“What Is The Meaning Of Loyalty To The Covenant Of Bahá’u’lláh And Who Are The Present Day Covenant Breakers?” - "Herald Of The Covenant"—November 1977

“Commentary On The Will And Testament Of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” - "Herald Of The Covenant" — January 1985

Letter To: Those Directing Affairs At The Bahá’í World Center: What Possible Answer Can You Give To Future Bahá’í Generations?

Letter To: Those Directing Affairs At The Bahá’í World Center: The Tablet Of The Holy Mariner Dooms Bogus Uhj To Extinction

“The Illegitimate Reign Of The "Custodians" At The Bahá’í World Center That Was Never Meant To Be”

“The Undeniable Falsehood Propagated By The Twenty-Six Hands Of The Cause That Only An Aghsán Could Inherit The Guardianship”

"Afnán As "Branch"

"If Only The Hands Had Taken The Time"

"Et Tu" Faithless Hands Of The Cause"

"The Lamentation Of Shoghi Effendi"

"This Most Great Order"

"How And Why Shoghi Effendi Obscured The Appointment Of His Successor And The Consequences."

"The Failed Abortion Of "The Child Of The Covenant" — The "Divinely-Conceived" Bahá'í Administrative Order Delineated In The Will And Testament Of 'Abdu'l-Bahá"

"Knowledge Of Which Language Is Essential For Present-Day And Future Guardians Of The Faith?"

"Even Now, I Could Also Sign It"

"The Satanic Collusion To Terminate The Institution Of The Guardianship"

Joel Bray Marangella Proclamatory Letter

Worms, Germany

November 12, 1969

To the faithful supporters of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world. Dearly beloved brothers and sisters in El Abhá,

Well nigh a decade has passed since a spiritual catastrophe of undreamt of magnitude revolving around the Guardianship of the Faith struck at the very roots of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and swept away all but a handful of stalwart defenders and champions of His Covenant. Following the passing of the first Guardian of the Faith, a small band of steadfast and intrepid supporters of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh who had refused to lose faith in the inviolability of this mighty Covenant and in the immortality of the "**Child of the Covenant**" — [the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá](#) — penned by the Center of that Covenant, recognized the second Guardian of the Faith appointed under the provisions of that divinely-conceived Document. They rallied to his support and defense and by their acts of courage, faith and devotion added another unforgettable chapter to the annals of our Faith. How very strange and unexpected it was for these faithful defenders of the Covenant to find themselves, then, the target of a veritable onslaught of vituperation and calumny launched against them by those believers who, during the ministry of the first Guardian of the Faith, had gained such widespread fame amongst their fellow believers for their devotion, fidelity and service to him, the chosen first minister of that Covenant. How paradoxical it was for these supporters of the second Guardian to be maligned and blasphemed for having remained faithful to the Covenant. How incomprehensible it was to them to find that so many of their fellow believers had permitted themselves to be led astray from the protection and safety of the Fold of the Covenant and the recognition of the second chosen minister of the Covenant, the Guardian of the Faith, so soon after the passing of the first Guardian. How saddening it was to learn that these formerly faithful friends had passed out from under the shade of the Covenant, had lost their faith in the inviolability and immortality of the provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and had, however unwittingly, joined the ranks of its enemies.

The first beloved Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, labored unremittingly over the span of his thirty-six year ministry to establish the Covenant on a firm foundation in the hearts and minds of the believers. His copious and matchless writings contain numberless passages devoted to the subject of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and to that priceless heritage, the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose provisions he said only future generations would fully comprehend. Those of us who read and studied the writings of Shoghi Effendi were thrilled by the sublime and supernal vision that he imparted to us of the future World Order of Bahá'u'lláh based on the divine System bequeathed to us in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. One might ask what more could Shoghi Effendi have said to bring to the friends a fuller comprehension of the divine origin, the immortality and immutability of the unique Institutions of that God-given System. What language could Shoghi Effendi have chosen to more glowingly and befittingly describe the sacred and divinely inspired character of that immortal Document — the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a Document characterized by him as the brightest emanation of His Mind, the divinely-conceived offspring resulting from the mystical union between the Mind of Bahá'u'lláh and the Mind of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and therefore the very Will and Purpose of the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation, Himself. And what more superlative appellation could he have given this Document than to extol it as a supplement to the Most Holy Book, Itself — The Aqdas — and therefore a part of the Divine Explicit Text whose Laws and provisions would remain sacrosanct and unalterable down through the ages of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. Supreme among the divinely-conceived Institutions bequeathed to us in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Institution of Guardianship, for the incumbent of that Office in the language of the Will and Testament is **"the expounder of the words of God"**, the director of the Hands of the Cause and the **"sacred head and distinguished member for life"** of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme legislative Organ of the Bahá'í Administrative System.

With the sudden and completely unexpected passing of the first Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, the believers suffered a tremendous shock, followed almost immediately by the second shock of finding that Shoghi Effendi had apparently failed to appoint a successor in the manner they had anticipated based on their interpretation of the provisions of the Will and

Testament. Failing to find a successor so appointed, the great majority of the believers, led by the then Hands of the Cause, forthwith concluded that the Institution of Guardianship had ended with the passing of Shoghi Effendi and that he had failed to appoint a successor in spite of all that he had said about the immortal provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. A small number of the believers had refused to accept this view and clung to their faith in the continuity of the Guardianship in spite of the signs at the time to the contrary. Some three years were to pass before the faith of those who had remained firm was vindicated and rewarded upon receipt of a [Proclamation issued by the second Guardian of the Faith at Ridván, 1960](#). This Proclamation struck as a thunderbolt in the Bahá'í World and brought on the spiritual catastrophe aforementioned. To the faithful few, it brought the joy of the realization that the line of Guardianship of the Faith had remained unbroken as promised in the Will and Testament and discovery of the unique manner in which Shoghi Effendi had provided for the continuity of the Guardianship in complete conformity to the provisions of the Will and Testament but not in accordance with the preconceived opinions of the believers. These faithful friends hastened to embrace the second Guardian and arose with renewed dedication to work for the victory of the Covenant. Armed with the irrefutable arguments contained in the [Proclamation](#) and Mason Remey's subsequent [Encyclical Letters](#), as well as the enlightening expositions in his "[Daily Observations](#)" penned during the painful and fateful years of his residence at Haifa following the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the faithful friends composed numerous treatises and apologia of their own supporting the claim of Mason Remey to the Guardianship.

In spite of the fierce opposition which the Proclamation engendered and the machinations of this new generation of violators of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, the true Faith under the hereditary Guardianship slowly began to grow and win adherence to its ranks in the four corners of the earth. It was not long before strong groups were formed on several continents followed by the establishment of Local Spiritual Assemblies and the formation of National Spiritual Assemblies in the United States and in Pakistan. The high water mark in this progress was reached with the historic announcement made by the second Guardian on 21 September 1964 of the creation of the second International Bahá'í Council (announced

in the October 1964 issue of the Glad Tidings). Through the means of this historic announcement, the second Guardian, similarly to the first Guardian, publicly announced to the believers the one whom he had chosen as his potential successor to Guardianship (i.e., by naming the President of the Council). But he had gone a step further than Shoghi Effendi to reinforce this appointment and to avoid any future doubt by placing in the hands of his successor-to-be well in advance of this public announcement a document written in his own hand naming him as his successor. This fact is herewith revealed publicly for the first time. This act of appointment goes back to the year 1961, some nineteen months after the Proclamation issued by Mason Remey. In December of that year a letter was received from Mason Remey in whose outer envelope was enclosed a smaller sealed envelope containing the following inscription written by Mason Remey on its face:

"Joel: Please take care of this sealed envelope among your papers in the Bernese Oberland. As I see things now it may have to do with the coming world catastrophe in or after 1963. You will know when to break the seal."

In accordance with the instructions contained thereon, this letter was deposited unopened in a safety deposit box in a bank near my permanent residence in Switzerland. Its receipt was mentioned to no one.

It remained for Mason Remey's announcement on September 21, 1964, of my appointment as President of the Second International Bahá'í Council (the embryonic Universal House of Justice) to publicly make known to the believers that I would be the third Guardian of the Faith unless, as he stated, I was unable to assume this Office. In this eventuality and apparently based on his conviction that the world catastrophe which he had prophesied would have grave and unpredictable consequences, he also designated the eight Vice-Presidents as potential successors in the order named. Soon after this public announcement I journeyed to Switzerland where for planning purposes I felt that the time had come to break the seal of the document which had been deposited there some three years earlier. The statement contained therein was handwritten at Washington, D.C. on December 5, 1961, and read as follows:

"Dear Joel: This is to tell you to tell the Bahá'í World that I appoint you to be the third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith according to the Will and Testament of the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Mason, Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith"

Upon reading this statement of appointment, I was first struck by the fact that it was addressed to me and not to the believers and that it commissioned me **"to tell"** the Bahá'í World that I was the third Guardian. The question which immediately arose in my mind was when I should tell the believers of this appointment. I concluded then that such an announcement on my part would only be appropriate after the passing of the second Guardian. Also, it occurred to me that such an announcement made after the passing of Mason Remey would then only be a confirmation of what had already been announced to the believers by the second Guardian at the time the second International Bahá'í Council was created. The thought did not cross my mind at that time that it would ever be proper to make this announcement in advance of the passing of the second Guardian. In this regard, Bahá'ís had accepted as a matter of course that the incumbent of the Office of Guardianship would hand over the spiritual scepter of this Office to his successor only at the hour of his death (although an examination of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not disclose that this is a precondition). I did not mention opening this letter of appointment to anyone at the time outside of my own family nor did I write to Mason Remey about it.

As time went on Mason Remey assigned increasing responsibilities to me in my capacity as President of the Council. A culmination was reached in the summer of 1965 when I visited him in Florence, Italy, and he instructed me to announce to the Bahá'í World the activation of the second International Bahá'í Council. He left the wording of this announcement to me. I recall wondering to myself at the time how I would word such an announcement as Mason Remey's Proclamation had made it very clear to all of us why Shoghi Effendi had never instructed him during his lifetime to activate the first International Bahá'í Council (created in 1951), for had he done so Mason Remey, as its President (i.e., the head of the Universal House of Justice), would have at that instant automatically become the second Guardian. Upon returning to France where I was residing at the time and

reflecting further on how I should phrase the announcement activating the Council, I prepared the statement which appears in the Glad Tidings of October 1965 under the heading of **"Council Assumes Task"**. This statement was forwarded to Mason Remey for approval, although he had not asked me to do so. A review of this statement will show that I attempted to resolve my dilemma by using such phrases as: **"the second International Bahá'í Council (the embryonic Universal House of Justice under the hereditary Guardianship) will not be convened at this time as a collectively functioning body"** and **"The President will assign responsibilities and tasks to individual members of the Council"**. However, recalling the circumstances surrounding the creation of the first International Bahá'í Council in 1951, it will be remembered that Shoghi Effendi, himself, had issued all instructions and assigned tasks to individual members of the Council. Therefore, Mason Remey, the embryonic Head of the embryonic Universal House of Justice, remained in this embryonic state destined only to emerge and come into active life as Guardian of the Faith upon the passing of Shoghi Effendi. My situation was different for it is now apparent that the procedure which I conceived and placed into effect with the aim of circumventing activation of the Council really did not accomplish this purpose at all. For the moment I assumed responsibility for directing members of the Council in the performance of their tasks the Council was actively functioning and activated under its President (its activation not necessarily being contingent upon a collective convocation of its members in a given place). The head of this functioning body could only be the Guardian of the Faith. Whether Mason Remey, himself, at the time, grasped the implications of his instructions to me to activate the Council is not known to me. If he did not, however, a subsequent announcement which he directed I prepare and release to the faithful Bahá'ís indicated that he had turned the affairs of the Faith over to me. In a letter under date of February 18, 1966, he stated: **"I am turning the affairs of the Faith over to you as the President of the second Bahá'í International Council to handle this for me — you having the other members of the International Council to assist you"** and further in this same letter **"from now on I will leave you free to conduct the affairs of the Faith, I making suggestions when necessary"**. (Published in the Glad Tidings of May 1966).

It is difficult to point to a specific date when the fortunes of the Faith under

the hereditary Guardianship began to falter and then later to decline rapidly, but it was soon after the formation of the second International Bahá'í Council. I, myself, suffered considerable consternation on more than one occasion at that time upon receiving letters from Mason Remey which were increasingly condemnatory of everything that the first Guardian of the Faith had said and accomplished during his ministry and which presented views diametrically opposite from many of those which he had expressed in his Proclamation, Encyclical Letters, Daily Observations and other writings penned during the early years of his ministry. In several instances I felt moved to write to Mason Remey on these matters pointing out in some cases that I felt this continued criticism of the actions of the first Guardian would serve no useful purpose, even if justified, and would in the eyes of the believers weaken the basis of his own claim to the Guardianship. I felt increasingly frustrated and helpless at the time, a feeling I am certain was shared by many of the faithful believers, as one by one the victories which we had won for the Covenant so recently, began to slip from our grasp. It was not long before the Bahá'í administrative institutions under the hereditary Guardianship were dismantled by Mason Remey and the second International Bahá'í Council which had been activated only some twelve months earlier was summarily dismissed without the slightest prior intimation to its President of his intention to do so. In a letter addressed to me on October 18, 1966, Mason Remey instructed: ***"At your leisure will you kindly turn over to me such records as you have of the second Council that no longer exists,"***

As sad as the situation had now become within the fold of the faithful believers, there remained for Mason Remey to make what to me was a startling and inexplicable announcement which had the effect of suddenly and fully awakening me to the gravity of the situation. This was an announcement in August 1967 that a person other than myself and not one of the original members of the second International Bahá'í Council whom he had designated as potential Guardians, had been appointed the third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. As Mason Remey had not nullified in any way his former appointment in 1961 of myself as third Guardian, it was inconceivable and incomprehensible that he should make an alternate appointment. For the first time I felt impelled to write to Mason Remey apprising him of my knowledge of his appointment of me as third Guardian

on December 5, 1961, enclosing a photostatic copy of same asking for an explanation. His reply offered no explanation and served to confirm my worst fears that something was seriously wrong if Mason Remey had forgotten, as was obviously the case, this all-important appointment. This sad turn of events, needless to say, caused a great commotion in my heart and soul. After meditating on the situation for some time in an effort to find a rational explanation, it dawned on my consciousness that the reason for this, as well as the lamentable state of affairs in the Faith and the conflicting statements which were coming from Mason Remey lay in the fact that the mantle of Guardianship no longer reposed on the shoulders of Mason Remey nor had it done so since the autumn of 1964 when I had opened the letter addressed to me by Mason Remey telling me to tell the Bahá'í World that I was the third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. As earlier explained, I had considered at the time that this was an announcement that I would only make after the passing of Mason Remey. But as I have already pointed out Mason Remey had on two occasions provided me with the opportunity, however unbeknownst to himself and unrecognized by me to take over the reins of the Faith (i.e., when the Council was activated in October 1965 and in February 1966). In some respects, my own failure to perceive my accession to the Guardianship parallels the experience of Mason Remey as it will be recalled that some three years elapsed (from 1957 to 1960) before he perceived that he had been the Guardian of the Faith since the passing of Shoghi Effendi.

Having finally come to the realization late in 1967 that I had actually been the Guardian of the Faith since 1964, the faithful friends may well ask why I did not forthwith claim this fact to them then and there. I can only say in reply that the thought of plunging the Faith into a fresh crisis over the matter of successorship was abhorrent to me. Moreover, I was certain that my claim to the Guardianship would now most certainly be openly repudiated by the very one who had appointed me to this supreme Office — my predecessor in the Office of Guardianship and one whom I had deeply loved and endeavored with all my heart and soul to faithfully serve. Further, I reasoned that this situation would be seized upon by the sans-Guardian Bahá'ís as proof of the falsity of Mason Remey's claim to the Guardianship following Shoghi Effendi's passing and would be considered by the non-Bahá'í world as further evidence of schism and division within

the Faith. With these thoughts in mind, coupled with my feeling that the faithful friends were not yet prepared to accept my claim to the Guardianship, I elected to remain silent and await the course of events.

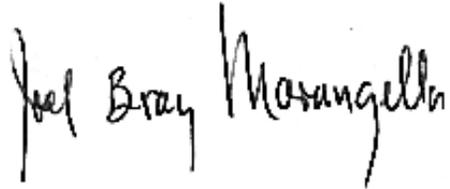
Encouraged and emboldened by the remarkable fact that a few believers have recently had the spiritual perception to recognize, without any solicitation on my part, my accession to the Guardianship, I have decided to break my self-imposed silence, to present herewith the basis of my claim to the present Guardianship of the Faith and to hereby proclaim this to the Bahá'í World. In doing so, I am keenly aware that once again the faithful supporters of the Covenant and the Guardianship will be severely tested. My one consolation lies in the thought that this new test may for once and for all cause the believers to realize that the Institution of the Guardianship of the Faith is independent of and apart from the individual who occupies this Office at a particular time. Down through the ages to come, different persons will sit upon the spiritual Throne of the Guardianship — a Throne upon which is focused the light of the Holy Spirit. Only when the one who is the "**chosen branch**" of the Tree of the Covenant is seated thereon does he become irradiated with that eternal Light and is he enabled to discharge the sacred Trust with which he has been invested.

Dearly beloved friends, the hour is late — very late indeed. The fortunes of our precious Faith have perhaps reached their lowest ebb since the fateful and tragic events of more than a century ago when following the martyrdom of the Báb, the heroes of this early epoch, were struck down one by one by the ferocious and pitiless attacks of the external enemies of the Faith. Has not our beloved Faith during the past decade sustained successive blows of an internal spiritual nature no less severe in their own way than those physical blows which decimated the heroic Dawnbreakers during the Dispensation of the Báb and as dire in their consequences? Rest assured, however, that these successive tests which have afflicted this infant Faith in accordance with God's inscrutable purpose can only further fortify the faith of those who stand fast and firm in the Covenant and spiritually prepare these faithful friends to more befittingly discharge their services to the threshold of Bahá'u'lláh.

The third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith supplicates God that the faithful friends will accept his Guardianship, unite as never before, forget past

differences, march forward together to regain our lost victories and continue onward to establish the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh on a firm and lasting foundation.

Your faithful and loving brother in El Abhá.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel Bray Marangella". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Joel" and last name "Marangella" being more prominent than the middle name "Bray".

Joel Bray Marangella

Third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith